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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

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8 APR 1981

The Honorable George Bush
President of the Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. President:

Pursuant to the Privacy Act of 1974, Public Law 93-579, transmitted herewith is a report of the proposed amendment to CIA Record System 10.

The appropriate notice of amendment to the record system has been sent to the Federal Register for promulgataion and public comment.

Sincerely,

/s/ Max Hugel

Max Hugel
Deputy Director
for
Administration

Enclosure

STAT

IPD

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DD/A Registry
81-0721

3 APR 1981

DD/A REGISTRY
FILE: Records

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Administration
FROM: Thomas H. White
Director of Information Services
SUBJECT: Records Reduction Plan

1. Forwarded herewith is the outline of a plan which it is believed would result in the disposal of a significant amount of records now being retained by this Agency. For brevity sake, I have not included much of the details that must still be worked out in connection with the plan. Additionally, I would rather not go too far until you have had a chance to review the matter and contributed your suggestions to the program. Once this has happened, we will then prepare a detailed step-by-step program which can then be presented to senior Agency managers in any form you choose, perhaps at an EXCOM meeting.

2. In addition to requesting the attached plan, you also requested information on the NPIC film being stored at the Agency Archives and Records Center. This collection of records amounts to approximately 23,000 cubic feet, 17,000 of which are stored at NPIC and 6,000 of which are stored at the Records Center. The collection is growing at the rate of 4,000 cubic feet per year and this rate may double to 8,000 cubic feet per year by 1985. The collection was reviewed in 1977 by the Agency and NARS, and NARS decided not to appraise the film at that time. Thus, the collection is not scheduled and no retention period has been set. I believe we can convince NARS to appraise the collection within the near future, and hopefully they will determine much of the material temporary. The only material being stored at the Records Center from this collection is the film.

3. Perhaps we can discuss this plan at our "1-on-1" meeting on 9 April.

STAT

Thomas H. White

Attachment

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D/A

REDUCTION OF INFORMATION HOLDINGS IN CIA

SYNOPSIS

Because of the limited space for the physical storage of information and the rapidly increasing amount of information to be stored, a program must be implemented to ensure that only absolutely necessary material is retained. Much effort has already been expended toward this objective, but it is dwarfed by the amount of work left to be done. The program will be complicated by the requirement that all series of records be scheduled before any material can be destroyed. Such scheduling must be approved by the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) which tends to view records more from an historical perspective than from a physical perspective. Additional complications arise because of the considerable manpower needs such a program will engender. Options requiring less effort are available, but would result in a program much less than satisfactory and cause considerable wheel spinning. In spite of these ramifications, the fact remains that within a short period of time our records storage facilities will be overcome unless a program is implemented soon to alleviate the situation.

OBJECTIVES

This plan has two major objectives and several secondary objectives. The major objectives are to:

1. Devise an Agency-wide program that will result in the disposition of significant quantities of information now being retained, and
2. A long range program which would ensure that only absolutely necessary information is retained in the future.

The secondary objectives are:

1. To enable us to comply with statutes and external regulations;
2. To ensure that the material retained is organized in its most usable fashion;
3. To free up floor space both at the Archives and Records Center and Headquarters;
4. To reduce the need for safe and other storage equipment; and
5. To standardize the process of maintenance, use, and disposition of records Agency-wide.

BACKGROUND

Storage space at the Agency Archives and Records Center is limited to approximately 130,000 cubic feet, of which 90,000 is already occupied. Records are being retired to the Records Center at a variable rate, but in 1980 deposits exceeded destruction by about 6000 cubic feet. Based on annual reporting, there are about 225,000 cubic feet of records stored in the Headquarters area buildings.

The law which drives the disposition of records is the Records Disposal Act of 1943. That Act requires that all Government agencies obtain prior approval by the Archivist of the United States before destroying any records. The Agency is subject to this Act, as confirmed by an OGC ruling in 1975. To ensure compliance with the Act, GSA at that time had issued two regulatory bulletins requiring all Government agencies to submit records control schedules covering all their records to NARS by the end of 1976.

Based on the above, the Agency embarked upon a program to "schedule" its records. Scheduling means identifying groups of related records, making a determination as to whether the records are permanent or temporary, and if temporary for what period of time they should be retained. These determinations, in the form of records control schedules, are then submitted to NARS for approval. Because the Agency had scheduled records only in a general sense, these new demands required that much work be done in a short period of time. As a result, the thoroughness of the scheduling effort and the accuracy of the determinations varied among Agency components, and some less than satisfactory decisions on retention periods were made. Because this was the first time the Agency and NARS had made formal decisions authorizing destruction, many of the retention periods decided upon were conservative and provided that records be retained longer than absolutely necessary.

Nevertheless, the Agency, for the first time, had comprehensive records control schedules covering the records of all components, and many records were authorized for immediate destruction. It was decided that all records holdings of the Agency would be reviewed, and records destroyed where authorized by the new schedules. It was further decided to begin this review at the Agency Archives and Records Center. One driving force for starting there was the wave of investigations sweeping the Agency and the need to know that all records pertaining to certain activities had been searched and to ensure that Records Center deposits were better identified for future requirements. In addition, it was necessary to make room for new deposits that would result from reviewing the Headquarters holdings.

With that in mind, Agency component managers were required to send teams of personnel to the Records Center to review all their records. Some 30 teams were sent, varying in size from 2 members to 100, over the period 1977 to 1980. As one result of these reviews, about 25 percent of material stored at the Records Center, has been destroyed.

It should be noted also that during the past several years the Records Management Division has worked with component managers in an attempt to improve on the original scheduling effort. For example, over the past 2 years, RMD has assigned personnel to work with the records management officers in some 20 offices to review records holdings, to develop or update records schedules, and to recommend the destruction of records where possible. This effort, although worthwhile, has not had a major impact on the Agency's records holdings.

SUGGESTED PROGRAM

Update the Records Schedules

No records can be destroyed unless they have been scheduled and the schedule approved by NARS. Because of the lack of uniformity in the records schedules during the initial phase in 1976, the first thing that must be done at this point is to update all records schedules covering material stored both at the Records Center and at Headquarters. This will require that the records holdings of all offices be surveyed. Newly established series of records must be documented in the schedules, as well as interoffice transfers of records series.

Permanent vs. Temporary

During the survey all records must be closely examined to determine whether they are permanent or temporary. Obviously, the more records that are determined to be temporary the more we will be able to dispose of eventually. This will require close coordination and well documented reasoning for effective presentation to NARS.

Records Retention Period

With respect to records determined to be temporary, it will then be necessary to closely examine the period set for retention of the records. This decision will be determined both by NARS' requirements and Agency needs for reference to the material. It is believed, however, that many retention periods should be shortened, thus hastening destruction of the records.

Disposition of Records

Once the above has been completed, it will be necessary to closely monitor all records schedules to ensure that temporary material is destroyed when it has reached its maturity date.

PROBLEMS

The above outlined plan is a big one. To perform the surveys and make the decisions will require the effort of large numbers of people. Office managers to a large extent do not feel the need to place a high priority on such an effort. On top of that they remember the Records Center review which required them to send many of their people out of town for long periods of time. Secondly, there are statutes and regulations that must be adhered to in this process, and with NARS' historical bent it may be difficult to convince them of the temporary nature of many records and the need to reduce retention periods.

OTHER OPTIONS

There are a number of efforts to be embarked on which would fall short of the large effort described above. These options include:

1. Notices, memoranda, etc., calling to senior managers' attention the need to reduce the amount of information being retained.
2. Require that all records managers certify that all files scheduled for retirement to the Records Center have been reviewed and all extraneous material purged.
3. The above plan be implemented office by office rather than on an Agency-wide basis.

While these are possible actions, none of them would achieve the desired result. Notices would be ignored, certificates could not be verified on a large scale, and component-by-component review would take years.